

CORRESPONDENCE

The Bacon Trade and Pork Production

To the Editor of FARMING:

I have been watching for some time the vast amount of advice that has been given to the farming community in reference to the production of export pork. As this has become one of the leading industries of to-day, I think it should be looked at from more than one standpoint, especially when that is an interested one. Most of this advice has been given by parties who, no doubt, know what they want, but are, as any practical farmer can see at once, utterly at sea when they begin to advise as to pork production. We have heard for the past few years but one ever reiterated statement, "There is no hog but the bacon hog," and the changes are many upon this word (bacon) until very many pork-producers are perplexed as to what it really means.

I have noticed that all this free advice has come from those who are engaged or interested in one line of the pork business, viz., the light bacon trade, as if that were the only article under the sun that was wanted in the pork line; and that the only proper hog for that purpose is an animal bred and fed in such a manner as not only will bring, but has brought, ruinous loss upon many who have run wild over this one of the many fads and booms which take place in all kinds of business from time to time. Large premiums were promised to those who would raise this remarkable hog for this marvellous trade that had suddenly sprung into existence (as though the English people had only just discovered that they wanted a rasher of bacon for breakfast). I need not add that premium has never exceeded a few cents, and not seldom those few have been on the other side.

What is this much talked-of trade? And is it one that never before existed? I answer that it has been an old established business for many long years, and has been supplied from many points, the leading ones being Denmark, Ireland and Canada. The supply from Canada has been, until within the past few years, somewhat limited, as no one to my knowledge made it a specialty until a comparatively recent date, Denmark doing the lion's share of business. Now what are the plain facts? That there is a demand in England among the wealthy classes, especially in London, for a lean kind of bacon known there as breakfast bacon and used for two special purposes, garnishing poultry and as rashers for breakfast, is well known. The demand for this kind is a limited one, however, and easily overdone. The poorer classes want and will have a thicker and fatter ham that will serve them as butter and shortening, etc.

Why, then, we ask ourselves, all this determined effort on the part of a few to boom one or two kinds of hogs to the exclusion of all others? The answer is not far to seek. The business has got into the hands of a few wealthy capitalists whose evident object is to flood the country with what they want, and then to an overcrowded market dictate their own terms. The great fat hog of four or six hundred weight is not wanted much to-day; but a nice, fleshy hog of 200 or 225 lbs. is, and always will be, in good demand. For this purpose there are breeds of hogs well adapted that are not being boomed by one or two interested parties.

A buyer from Montreal was at my place the other day looking for hogs. Let me quote his own words: "I have left this morning over twenty five hogs that are of no use in Montreal, and I cannot get anything like what we want down there. The farmers are raising these razor-backs, and I would not take a car-load of them as a gift, for I could not sell them. I have been inducing everyone I see to desist from breeding these unsaleable hogs and breed smooth, fleshy hogs such as we need for our market. Otherwise the western hogs must be obtained and the razor backs left for whoever wants them."

As I purpose in the near future to refer to the advice that has been given in the past as to the feeding and preparation of the hog for market from the same sources as above, I will now close, thanking you for your valuable space and wishing you success with your paper, "a merry Christmas and a happy New Year." I have the honor to remain,

Yours truly,

R. L. HOLDSWORTH.

Port Hope, Ont., Dec. 13th, 1898.



A New Plan Suggested for Conducting a Milking Test

To the Editor of FARMING:

Since the question of a milking test was introduced last spring there has been considerable discussion upon the subject, which I believe will result in getting a test that will give genuine satisfaction to breeders of the different breeds of cattle. The test which has been used in the past must be admitted by all unprejudiced minds to be a very faulty and partial affair. When a cow which has been milking six months has to compete with a cow freshly calved, it is entirely unfair, and equally unfair is it for a cow weighing 800 to compete against a cow weighing 1,400. Again, what does it signify for one man to bring out one single cow that will make a big record? Even if this cow won, it would not be any indication that that particular breed would do so, or that even the herd to which that cow belonged would do any better than the average cow. We must, therefore, conclude that such a test as has been used in the milking competition at Toronto is by no means an ideal one.

It has been proposed that the old test be changed to a ten days' test, and that the food be taken into consideration. Now, as everyone knows who has had anything to do with such a test, it would mean a very great deal of work to carry it on, but, at the same time, it must be admitted that a food test would be the only accurate method of estimating the true value of a dairy cow.

The first thing which would be well to consider is that it is not the value of individual cows which should be considered, but the herds of cows. Instead of making a test of individual cows, I would recommend that prizes be offered for herds of not less than four each, and then offer a prize for the best cow if thought advisable.

As regards taking feed into consideration, I think that a much easier method may be adopted. In several of the dairy



"WE DON'T WANT TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED."